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Rubber World

The technical magazine Volume December 1988

Dynamic rubber in automotive parts

Advances in acrylic cure technology

Engineered TPEs for automotive applications

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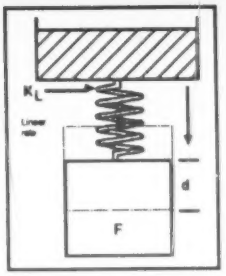
Non-tire automotive



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Editorial

It's ironic that the announcement by the government that it might not approve a proposed merger of the silicone businesses of Union Carbide and General Electric came on the heels of the announcement that Degussa was buying the carbon black business of Ashland Chemical. Ashland ran afoul of government anti-trust rules a few years ago when it thought it would make itself more competitive in the carbon black market through the purchase of Phillips Chemical's carbon black business. The government trust busters stepped in and nixed the deal. They claimed it would reduce competition in this market. Phillips, wishing to divest these operations, sold its European and African operations to Degussa and one of its U.S. plants to Sid Richardson Carbon. Degussa of West Germany then completed acquisition of what would have been the Ashland/Phillips business with its recent announcement. There has been no indication from the government of a challenge to this formation of the second largest carbon black producer in the world.

But the government is objecting to the formation of the second largest silicone producer in the world. The Federal Trade Commission has stated the formation of GE-Carbide Silicones could substantially lessen competition in both production and sale of silicone products. GE is the second largest silicone producer worldwide and Union Carbide ranks sixth. GE is second and Carbide third in U.S. production.

The problem this proposed union is having is that both are U.S. based and the rules governing such activity are antiquated and apparently out of tune with what the rest of the federal bureaucracy is attempting to do with trade. The problems with U.S. anti-trust laws have been addressed many times. The Reagan administration's Justice Dept. has revised merger guidelines twice. Both times the intent was to increase the competitiveness of American business. They were bureaucratic responses to the rising imbalance of trade. Political rhetoric toward the woes of U.S. industries' claim of competing on an uneven playing field usually resulted in the industry being blamed. Industry was told there was no longer just an American market, that now it was a world marketplace. American business was told they were going to have to rethink their market positions into global terms.

Some have, and maybe the conclusions called for mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures or licensing agreements. And maybe the scope of their decisions wasn't large enough to wake the lawyers at the Justice Department or the FTC. This isn't the case for GE or Carbide, they're going to have to get more competitive some other way. Like letting some foreign firm acquire both of them.

Don R. Smith
Editor

RubberWorld

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Business Briefs

Acquisitions, expansions

Cooper Tire & Rubber is constructing a 40,000 sq. ft. addition to its automotive hose, tubing and body seal plant in Bowling Green, OH. A 20% increase in production capacity is to be realized upon completion in 1989. The new building addition will be used for warehousing and storage. The current warehouse area will be converted to increased production of extruded, molded and formed automotive hoses and tubing, and dual durometer body sealing products.

Monsanto will undertake a multi-million dollar project that will increase thermoplastic elastomer production by 150% at its Pensacola, FL plant. The expansion is expected to be completed early in 1990.

Polysar announced capacity expansions for ethylene and polystyrene resins. A $50 million (Canadian) expansion at the Corunna, Ontario manufacturing facility will increase ethylene capacity 20%. Upon completion during the first quarter of 1990, the plant will have an annual capacity of 1.2 billion pounds. The company plans on adding 300 million pounds of polystyrene resin capacity over the next two years. A major expansion is underway at the Decatur, AL plant that will add 200 million pounds.

A major plant investment program has been completed at **Cadillac Rubber's** Cadillac, MI plant. Six new transfer molding machines will increase transfer press capacity by up to 25% and two injection presses have been added.

Degussa is building a 5 million pound per year organosilanes plant at its Mobile, AL chemical complex. The preliminary product will be a bifunctional polysulfidic organosilane used to improve reinforcing and crosslinking properties of rubber to rubber and rubber to filler compounds.

BFGoodrich is undergoing a $22.9 million expansion and renovation of its R&D center in Brecksville, OH. A new 75,100 sq. ft. building and a 23,700 sq. ft. expansion of the main building are planned and are expected to be completed in 1990.

Ferro Corp. purchased the **Leglo Color Co.**, Huron, OH, a division of **Harwick Chemical**. Leglo manufactures specialty color and additive concentrates and dry color blends.

D&A International, Sacremento, CA is building a $2.5 million latex centrifuging plant in Sri Lanka. The company is also creating a joint venture in Sri Lanka to build a $5.5 million latex glove manufacturing plant that will produce 250 million latex examination gloves annually.

Exxon Chemical is proposing to build a $40 million normal-paraffins plant at Sri Racha, Thailand. Annual capacity will be 80,000 tons, over half of it for export. The plant would be operational 30 months after government approval. Exxon also announced it will build a high density polyethylene resin plant in Mont Belvieu, TX with an annual capacity of 265 million pounds.

DSM Chemical has opened a sales office in Atlanta, GA for its products which include caprolactam, ammonium sulphate, surfactants and chemical specialties.

Columbian Chemicals formed a division for the production and marketing of its iron oxide line. The Mapico Division will be located in St. Louis, MO.

Ashland Chemical acquired **Royell, Inc.**, a Menlo Park, CA based distributor of glass reinforcements, unsaturated polyester resins and other materials to manufacturers of fiber-reinforced plastic products.

RMA rubber report through June
(figures in metric tons)

	YTD 1988	YTD 1987	% chg.
Total new rubber			
New rubber available	2,302,698	2,179,882	5.6
Imports	751,218	742,572	1.2
Exports	385,667	330,034	16.9
Apparent consumption	1,888,986	1,844,955	2.4
Total natural rubber			
Imports	573,255	551,684	3.9
Exports	32,747	23,283	40.7
Apparent consumption	543,075	526,578	3.1
Total synthetic rubber			
Production	1,551,480	1,439,310	7.9
Imports	177,963	190,888	-6.8
Exports	352,920	306,751	15.1
Apparent consumption	1,345,906	1,318,372	2.17.8
Total SBR			
Production	601,589	559,146	12.0
Imports	60,971	54,455	16.1
Exports	129,987	111,925	1.8
Apparent consumption	512,951	503,894	
Total nitrile			
Production	49,452	43,825	12.8
Imports	10,885	10,278	5.9
Exports	10,903	9,044	20.6
Apparent consumption	50,165	43,934	14.2
Polybutadiene			
Production	270,334	240,882	12.2
Imports	55,287	57,743	-4.3
Exports	41,627	41,967	-.8
Apparent consumption	273,890	258,653	5.9
Ethylene-propylene			
Production	177,767	167,719	6.0
Imports	8,016	4,014	99.7
Exports	37,435	31,152	20.2
Apparent consumption	148,511	135,193	9.9
Butyl, polychloroprene, polyisoprene, silicone and other synthetic elastomers			
Production	451,337	425,738	6.0
Imports	42,804	64,398	-33.5
Exports	132,968	112,663	18.0
Apparent consumption	360,389	376,700	-4.3

Business Briefs

Fisons Instruments will begin operations in January, 1989. The Valencia, CA firm will consolidate existing sales, service and technical support in North and South America for the product lines from **Applied Research Laboratories, Haake Instruments** and **Carlo Erba Instruments.**

HBI/Haake Buchler Instruments, Saddle Brook, NJ sold its Buchler product line to **Labconco Corp.,** Kansas City, MO. The Buchler line consists of products for electrophoresis, liquid chromatography and evaporation.

Progressive Machine Co. built a new manufacturing and headquarters building in Ringwood, NJ for its spooling and traverse winding systems.

U.S. elastomer production and sales, 1987

Elastomers	Production	Sales Quantity	Value	Average unit value
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 dollars	Per pound
Grand Total	4,690,358	3,108,761	2,714,048	$.87
Butadiene-acrylonitrile type (NBR-type)	142,238	96,544	93,666	.97
Ethylene-propylene type (EP-type)	521,673	441,837	317,852	.72
Polybutadiene (solution polymerized) type (BR-type)	689,665	338,399	151,633	.45
Silicone (Q) type elastomers	186,010	142,267	494,283	3.47
Styrene-butadiene type (SBR-type)	1,828,911	993,158	458,654	.46
Styrene-butadiene-vinylpyridine type	20,936	10,098	11,000	1.09
Thermoplastic elastomers (such as styrene block copolymers, thermoplastic olefin elastomers, thermoplastic polyurethane elastomers, and co-polyesters)	421,997	364,277	401,841	1.10
All other elastomers	878,928	722,181	785,119	1.09

Contracts, licenses

Goodyear and **EMS Chemie** of Switzerland signed an agreement where **EMS-American Grilon** will sell Goodyear produced hydroxyl functional resins along with its carboxyl resins in North America. Goodyear's Point Pleasant, WV plant will modify production lines to be able to produce both types.

Sears has added **Bridgestone** tires to its product line in its 803 Tire and Auto Centers.

DSM has granted Czechoslovakia's **VUGPT** (Rubber and Plastics Technology Research Institute) the license to develop DSM's Nyrim nylon block copolymers in CSSR.

Tech Sales Co., Downsview, Ontario, Canada has been appointed manufacturers representative by **Hydralign, Inc.** for its web guiding systems and other web-processing related products.

Financial statements

American Biltrite reported third quarter net earnings were $403,000 on sales of $38.5 million.

BP Chemicals reported that profit for the third quarter was $207 million.

NL Industries' chemicals business reported operating income of $73.1 million on sales of $246.9 million for the third quarter.

Park-Ohio reported a third quarter loss of $58,000 on sales of $30.4 million.

Markets, news

The U. S. Industrial Trade Commission's report on synthetic organic chemicals shows that production of synthetic rubber in 1987 increased 14.9% from 1986 to 4.69 billion pounds. Production has increased 16.9% since 1983. Total sales of elastomers in 1987 amounted to 3.1 billion pounds, a 25% increase over 1986. SBR use accounted for 1.85 billion pounds which includes 21 million pounds of vinylpyridine. Polybutadiene production reached 690 million pounds, while production for other elastomers showed EPDM production at 522 million pounds, butadiene/acrylonitrile at 142 million pounds, silicones at 186 million pounds and thermoplastic elastomer production was 422 million pounds.

The United States Federal Trade Commission is seeking a preliminary injunction to block the silicone joint venture proposal of General Electric and Union Carbide. The FTC

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